

George William Fairfax to George Washington, March 2, 1775, Letters to Washington and Accompanying Papers. Published by the Society of the Colonial Dames of America. Edited by Stanislaus Murray Hamilton.

FROM THE HONORABLE GEORGE WILLIAM FAIRFAX.

NEWTON March 2d: 1775

MY DEAR SIR

Your very obliging favor of the 15th of November last, I received only the 23d Ultó:. Immediately upon which, I wrote to London to know whether any Ships would be now sent to America, and have for answer, that one would Sail about the 8th instant.

Therefore I sett down to acquaint you, that I had, so far engaged a Horse for you, as only to wait this month for your directions, and its luckey enough they came in time, for I think I should have ventured to have given more than you seem to incline, tho' much under the Price before mentioned.—The uncertainty of your Return, from the Service of the Country, I suppose prevented either Mr. Peyton, or Willis waiting on You, indeed I should not like that they should be to troublesome. Mr. Willis may have his Reasons for Postponing the Sale, and Renting the House &c: to so late a Season as the 5th Decr.; but I should have thought (If the Stock was to be Sold) the time you fixed would have been more Eligable, indeed a better time for the whole. As to the Furniture Remaing: I can only repeat, that, unless we can gett near the Value of that in the Chinch Room, I should like to have it sent Over if Possible, meaning only the Curtains, Couterpains and Covers of the Chairs, and that entire in the Blue, or Dressing Room, I must beg your acceptance of, and the sooner its taken away the better. You kindly mentioned, some time ago, that the House at Belvoir

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leaked very much, and that it was necessary to have it new Cover'd. Pray my good Sir direct Mr: Willis to gett it done, or whatever you may now, or hereafter think proper to be done in the best manner, you, I dare say, can Order the best Shingles from this the dismal, Plank may be either bought or sawed in the Neck to cover the Roof: or other Services, for I would by all mean keep the House tight, and will without, whatever it may be within.

I am exceedingly sorry to hear, that you, & our Friend Colo. Tayloe were engaged in so disagreeable a business, as the Sale of poor Colo. Mercers Estate, it's what I apprehended, and do sincerely wish it may fetch as much as TB and Mr: Ballendine Estimated it at last Spring, when the Colonel sent it me, to put my name to it, which I was sorry to decline, as I felt much for Him, yett I thought I could not do it against my own Opinion, and give the Mortgagees cause to Censure Me hereafter

It astonishes me very much, my good Sir, to find that you have had so many Prov'd Accots. presented against me. You Sir, indeed I might almost say, the whole Colony knew, or heard of my intention of going to England, for Years, and its well known, that I Advertised it some time before [I] Embarked, desiring Persons, having any Claim to bring them in, in Order to be discharged, and I thought myself happy in Leaving few or no Debts unpaid. But no sooner than my Back is turned, and not able to Face these Artfull and ill designing People, they are brought in and above all are sworn to. I mention these things my Friend, rather to justify myself a little to You, not to stop any just Debts being paid. and could ask Jonathan Stone, Bryan Allison &c. why they did not bring in their Accts: when I was present? which I absolutely say they did not. I must Confess my Book, or Ledger was not kept as I could have, and now wish it had been, yett I thought few excepting yourself, and Merchts. could be much more regular, in taking of Receipts, or minuiting in a little long Clasp Book, and a Marble cover'd one; the Money I paid, and also in keeping together such Accots: and Receipts, as I did not think worth raising an Accot: for.—I could say much more on this Subject, but I fear I have tired your patience already, and that I shall carry it beyond the bounds of a Letter, espetially when I am shortened as to time, being again called upon a Committee appointed to draw up a Petition to the C—n in favour of

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America. Therefore must only beg that You'll lett Mr: Peyton (if He has not them already) have the two little Books mentioned, the loose Accot: and Receipt, (for I cannot think of taking up either your, or your Clerks time) with directions to pay those that are just and right, without giving you the trouble, for I am truly and sincerely ashamed of the trouble you have had in my affairs, and I want Words to express my acknowledgment of them.—Here I must return a little, and inform you, that [I] Employ'd Jonathan Stone rather out of Charity, and lett him have Money, or Orders upon the Mercht: at Colchester whenever he wanted, and frequently was largely in advance, during which He told me as well, as he was able, a melancholy Tale of his having a right to some Land in Maryland. I took Councel for him, and Employed Mr: Johnston who Pleaded in that Province, in Order that the poor Man should have justice, upon this He grew negligent, worked only part of days, and charged me with whole ones, often gave in a greater number of Rails than either Andrew Taws, or Daniel Stone, after him rendered an Accot: of, which I dare say can appears, and if He ment the Honest thing, He must acknowledge, that I had frequently offer'd him if any Ballce: there was, upon a just and fair settlement, if he could make it appear, I would pay it. But He was foolishly obstinate, and I did not care to be imposed upon, by paying for Services not performed. As to poor Honest Daniel Stone, He preferred Twenty Pounds, standing Wages, to a Share of the Crop, had it whenever he pleas'd, and often urged me to keep it in my hands to buy a young Negroe, which his heart seemed to be sett upon, but being disappointed. I indulged him with the one He fancied of mine the very morning I saw you last, at a less value than Mr: Willis sett her at, and then clos'd and Sign'd the Accot: so that I apprehend if Mr: Willis was to examine that Accot: he will find that fifteen or Sixteen pounds was not at that time due to Daniel, but would be the Janry: or Feby: following the time that his Wages commenced, and then I dare say I desired him to pay the Ballance, as indeed I would do every Mans, espetially an honest poor Labouer, who I never ment to injure, in my Life, but on the contrary have assisted many. – Pardon my good Sir this digression as I cannot help feeling the malignity of such Accusers.—Now to return to your last I am sorry to find that Mr: Willis should give you the trouble of writing about the Tobacco, or any part of his Duty, tho' ultimately it may turn out to my Advantage

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that no more than seven Hhds: were Shipt, yett I wish that the whole had been sent, for this is the time I stand most in need.—I hope before this, that Mess Adam, Campbell & Dalton have ventured upon the Bloomery Accot: which I was anxious of doing Years ago, & applied to Mess##: Ross, Henderson and Lawson for that purpose, but owing to the difficulties of getting the parties together, or some other Cause, that I am a stranger to, It was omitted untill the day before we left Belvoir, when it was impossible to Enter upon so Perplexed a business. Mr: Campbell being then there readily offered his very kind assistance, I gave him the little Trunk, containing those Papers, and willingly consented to leave it to him, Mr: Dalton and others named in a peice of paper. If I mistake not, Mr: Dalton was in the House, the morning you & Lady, was so good as to come and see Us the day we Embarked, You possibilly may remember (as I do to my great uneasyness) that Mr: Willis only came the Eveng: before or that very morning, by which, things were left in such confusion, instead of his coming there to reside, as was my Plan.

What can, or dare I say, about the unhappy difference between this Country and America. That you are condemned by the M—y, and their dependents, and much Aplauded by ever [y] welwisher to the Antient and Constitutional Right of Englishmen, whether on this, or the other side of the Atlantic; of which there are a great Majority in this County. You'll hear probabelly before this reatches you, what Steps have been taken, how supported, and defended, and at last how inconsistantly they have Acted in the great World, various are the Conjectures about the much talked of Motion,¹ and sudden change, some thinks it proceeds from unfavourable Accounts from the Continent of Europe, some that they are frightened at the Expence, and others that it was only intend: to Intimidate, and cause a disension in the Colonys, But I rather think that they find they have gone far enough, that the Americans are not so easily Duped, and that a War cross the Atlantic will be the most expences one they have had, and the difficulty of raising the Supplys to support so unnatural a one. It is pretty certain that the M—r has lost ground, that many of his Friends did desert him upon the late Question, and such a jealousy has arose, that its thought, a change in the M—y must soon take Place.—God grant, that it may be for the better,

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worse I think it cannot be, consequently we all hope for an Amendment, yett I fear it never will happen while the Premier, has so many lucrative Places in his disposal, and People grow more and more Extravagant, However this We can, and I believe very justly say, that Law is on our side, for all the Law Lords that do not fill some high Office, and many great disinterested Gentn: in the Commons, are in support of America, and by examining the List, you may find that many of the Worthies are sent from this part of the Kingdom.

It is reported in London, that you are Training the People of Virginia to the Use of Arms, I hope you do not find those of your own County the most defficient, or that they misbecome their new uniform. They are going to have a General Review of all the Militia here, but for what I know not, as it's not Customary, time only will shew the Event of all things, and God grant you, your Privilages and a happy and speedy Reconciliation upon Constitutional Principles, is the daily Prayer of Dear Sir

Your Affect: and Most Obliged humble Servt: G: W: FAIRFAX

1 Lord North's conciliatory motion, passed in the House of Commons (274 against 88), February 20, 1775.